

MORNING BUSINESS

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. Under the previous order, the Senate will be in a period of morning business for debate until 12 noon, with the time equally divided and controlled between the two leaders or their designees, with Senators permitted to speak therein for up to 10 minutes each.

CONTINUING APPROPRIATIONS

Mr. DURBIN. Madam President, there were two headlines in most of the major newspapers across the United States this morning. I saw it in *Financial Times* as well as the *Wall Street Journal*. The headlines noted: "Americans flock to insurance exchanges."

It was the first day when we had the rollout of the Web site where uninsured Americans had an opportunity to shop—real competition, a variety of plans. Illinois has 54 choices for uninsured people. This is a dream come true. Most of these people have lived their entire lives either without health insurance or with no choice, a take-it-or-leave-it policy that may be worthless when they need it. These are situations where many of them never once in their lives were able to be insured when it came to health insurance. There were a lot of reasons for it. Some of them had jobs that paid so little, offered no benefits, and they couldn't afford to buy health insurance. Some of them had preexisting conditions or perhaps a history of asthma in their family, diabetes, cancer survivors. They couldn't buy health insurance if they wanted to. It wasn't even offered.

Yesterday was different. October 1 was different as 2.8 million Americans came on the first day to this Web site to go shopping for health insurance. What a relief it must have been.

The Chicago papers told the story of a man who had just about given up hope because he had a child with a mental illness and because of that he could never buy health insurance. He was shopping yesterday. He was disappointed. He wanted to sign up yesterday, but so many people came to this Web site the first day that it wasn't able to meet all of the needs of the people who were shopping, or wanted to.

It will. There will be an opportunity. I am sure it will be soon.

I can't get over when I hear the Republican leader come to the floor and, with barely disguised glee, talk about the first day's problems with the Affordable Care Act. There is no question that many Republicans are not only praying for the Affordable Care Act to fail, they are betting on it.

None of them voted for it, not one. Not a single Republican voted for it. They are frightened—frightened at what is to come when the verdict of history comes down on this program. I think I know what the verdict will be. There will be some bumps in the road, glitches, maybe, some problems with

the Web site. But in the end the American people understand the fundamental fairness of the Affordable Care Act; the fundamental fairness that said, yes, we have a right as Americans to health care protection. I believe we do and we should.

I have lived the life, a good one, but I had a moment in that life when I had no health insurance. I was a brandnew father with a brandnew baby with medical challenges and no health insurance. I have never felt more helpless in my life, praying that my little girl would get the best when I didn't have health insurance.

Multiply that times 40 million uninsured Americans and understand what is at stake. Those on the other side who are opposed to affordable care don't want to extend the helping hand of health insurance to those who have been denied for years. They don't have anything to replace it with. Stick with the current free market system.

Forty million Americans have been left behind with this current system. That is why I supported the Affordable Care Act. This is why the President is fighting for the Affordable Care Act. This is why we have to continue to fight every single day to make sure it is not defunded, as the Republicans tried to do only a few days ago, to make sure the coverage for individuals is not delayed as the Republicans tried to do only a few days ago.

No, we have to fight to make sure Americans have this chance. There is no turning back when it comes to offering health insurance to families who desperately need it.

What are the Republicans prepared to bet on this wager to end the Affordable Care Act and health care reform? They are willing to bet the Federal Government. They are willing to shut it down over the Affordable Care Act.

HARRY REID, our Democratic leader, told the story that was reported in the *Wall Street Journal* that the National Institutes of Health—not far from here, in the near suburbs of Maryland and which is a beacon of hope—this is where some of the most important medical research in the world is taking place. The head of NIH, Dr. Francis Collins, may be one of the most extraordinary people who has ever been involved in public service. He was head of the National Genome Project. They said it would probably take him 5, 6, or 8 years. He was so good and had so much talent that he did it in a very brief period of time—mapping the human genome. In doing so, he started opening doors to understanding, knowledge, and finding cures. He took that back to the NIH and they apply it every single day to save lives and find cures.

For the second day in a row, three-quarters of the scientists, doctors, and researchers at NIH sit at home, unable to engage in this critically important research, unable to find the new drugs, new surgeries, new medical devices, and the new procedures to save lives.

That is part of the Republican government shutdown. Oh, they may congratulate themselves on finally bringing this government to its knees, but they have to take responsibility for what they have done as well. They have shut down the National Institutes of Health. They have shut down medical research. It is worse because the toughest medical cases in America end up at the doorsteps of NIH. These are the most challenging medical conditions, families and people who have just about given up hope and think there is one last place to go, NIH, the very best.

Yesterday Dr. Francis Collins announced that 200 people who would have started clinical trials this week at the NIH were turned away because of the government shutdown. Within that population of 200, 30 were children, most of them cancer victims. Imagine for a moment that you are the mother or father of a child diagnosed with cancer and have one last hope, the National Institutes of Health. It may be a great personal sacrifice for you and your family to pick up and come out here, but you are going to do it. It is your baby. Then when you arrive at the door of the NIH there is a sign that says: This agency is closed.

Why is it closed? Some national emergency, some disaster, some crisis? No. It was a manufactured political temper tantrum coming from the tea party, Speaker BOEHNER, and those who believe this is the right way to go.

Excuse me if this example is so stark, but I haven't even begun to go into the details. I would invite any family who has been a victim of this government shutdown at NIH or any other medical facility, come to my Facebook page, my Twitter account. Send me a message and tell me your story. I wish to come to the floor and tell that story too.

People shouldn't disappear into the shadows as we make all this noise over this political debate. They ought to be front and center. Please share your story if you wish. I know it is a matter of privacy and confidentiality. If you don't want to, I certainly understand.

This is what it has come down to. Yesterday, for example, in the House they said: Oh, we are going to open the Veterans' Administration. Senator CRUZ has made a decision he is going to pick and choose the agencies to reopen. We will start with the Veterans' Administration. In other words, as former Speaker PELOSI said, they are going to release one hostage at a time when it comes to our Federal Government.

But what Senator CRUZ and the tea party Republicans failed to acknowledge is of the 800,000 Federal employees who have been furloughed, over 500,000 are veterans. They are out of work. If they care about the veterans, put this government back to work, put 500,000 of our veterans back to work. Incidentally, one out of four of them is disabled, disabled veterans put off the payroll and furloughed. There is no